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Vol. CCV

No. 5358

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see bottom of last page of text

I am the
Safety glass—Triplex
Regd



WHEN you awake in the morning bright-eyed, refreshed and full of energy . . . looking forward to the new day with cheerfulness and confidence . . . you can claim to have enjoyed a good night's sleep.

If you find such restful, restorative sleep the exception rather than the rule, try the effect of a cup of delicious "Ovaltine" every night at bedtime. Its soothing nourishment will help you to relax, calm your nerves, bring sleep more readily and assist in making that sleep completely refreshing and restorative.

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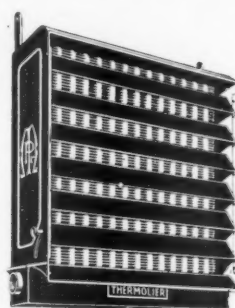
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Ovaltine

for Peaceful, Restorative Sleep

Prices in Gt. Britain and N. Ireland,
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THERMOLIER UNIT HEATER

is installed in industrial premises there is no danger of discomfort through uncontrolled heat. Warm air is provided at working level, exactly where required, and the comfort of the worker is assured.

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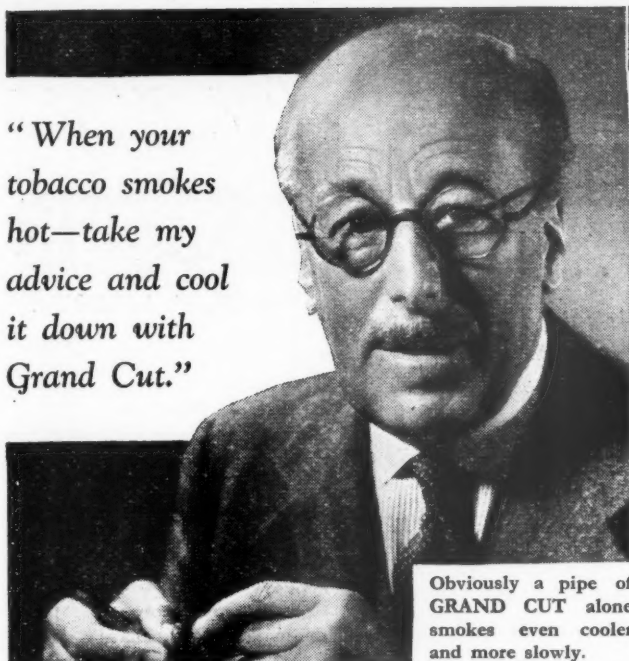
HOUSEWIVES TO BE . . .
We, who owe our success to the housewives of peace-time Britain, record here our tribute to their daughters and grand-daughters in uniform

Salute! FROM HOOVER



HOOVER LIMITED, PERIVALE, GREENFORD, MIDDLESEX.

"When your tobacco smokes hot—take my advice and cool it down with Grand Cut."



Obviously a pipe of GRAND CUT alone smokes even cooler and more slowly.

Grand Cut

2 oz. for 5/-

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Marmite, the Yeast food-extract, provides the essential Vitamins of the B group—thus adding nourishment as well as delicious flavour to all Soups, Stews and Gravies. Marmite makes a savoury filling for Sandwiches.

TOOTH SECURITY



The forces of decay are always waiting to attack. And the teeth we have now must last a lifetime: there is no re-issue. Food particles which cling to the teeth provide a foothold for decay. Only by thorough brushing after every meal can we be sure that the enemy is not infiltrating through our defences.

This regular brushing is a precaution open to us all; but brushing, no matter how painstaking, with a toothbrush that because of its shape cannot possibly reach the entire surface of every tooth, is inefficient.

Tek is the one toothbrush scientifically designed to fit every mouth, to clean every tooth and every part of every tooth.

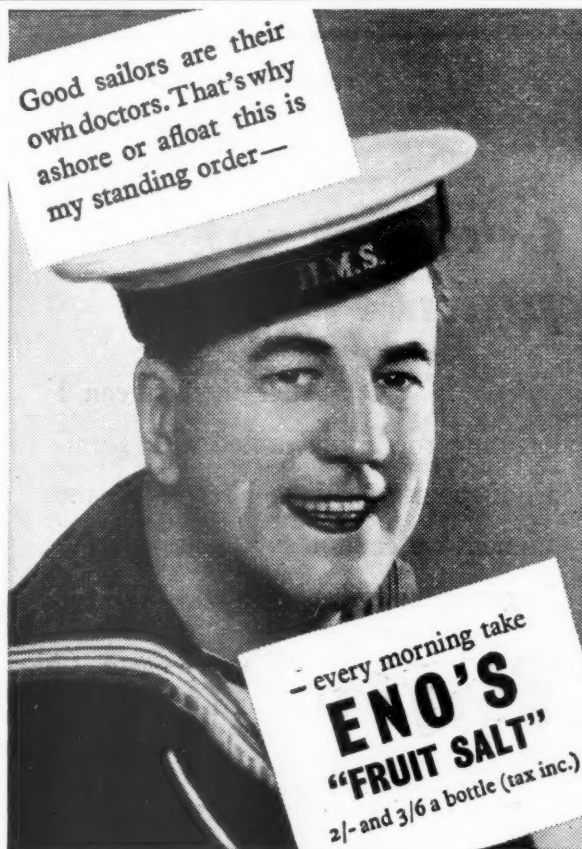
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JOHNSON & JOHNSON (Gt. Britain) Ltd.
Slough and Gargrave T.10

Good sailors are their own doctors. That's why ashore or afloat this is my standing order—



— every morning take
ENO'S
"FRUIT SALT"
2/- and 3/6 a bottle (tax inc.)

To MEMBERS of the Scottish Widows' Fund

Most of our new-business staff is on war service but the utmost will be done to maintain the Society's life assurance service.

In two ways MEMBERS can do much to help:—

1. Keep correspondence with the Society at a minimum, and
2. Either to us or to your agent, give introductions to likely new members.

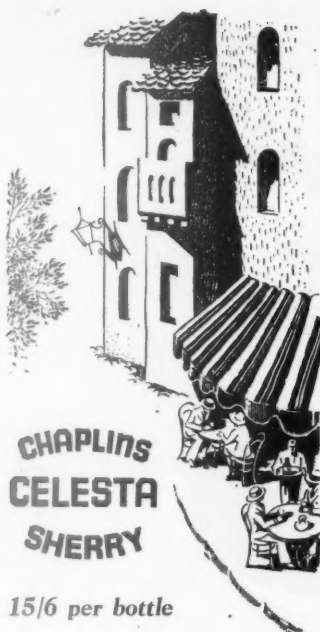
REMEMBER, we cannot now send anyone to urge you to increase your own life assurance — just DO IT WITHOUT BEING ASKED.

Write to your agent or to the Secretary,

SCOTTISH WIDOWS' FUND



Head Office:
9 St. Andrew Square,
Edinburgh, 2



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15/6 per bottle

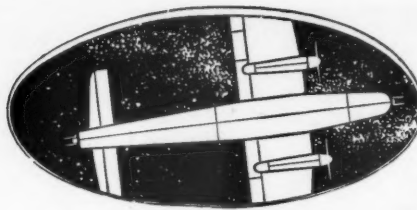
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Wholesale Wine and Spirit Merchants, Distillers
and Vineyard Proprietors. LONDON • GLASGOW



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Cephus The safe & certain remedy
FOR COLDS & FLU



That Plastic plane . . . !

If you had seen the American "all-plastic" plane which, before Pearl Harbour, was regularly making headlines, you would have said "That's wood—not plastics". Put simply, the so-called plastic plane is just a lot of thin layers and strips of wood bonded together by means of plastics to form a smooth-skinned, solid and immensely strong whole.

Wood is an excellent material, but it has some defects. Plastics are pretty good too, but although we're biased we admit they have limitations. Put wood and plastics together and several of the shortcomings of both disappear, while some new qualities emerge. It's a combination which may be important to many people, so why not ask about it from someone who knows?



BRITISH INDUSTRIAL PLASTICS LTD. • ONE ARGYLE ST. • LONDON • W. 1

POST-WAR PICTURE

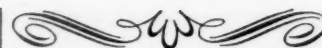
Remarkable "made-to-measure" paint products developed by Berger chemists to fit the special equipment, varied technique and novel application methods of service use, hold great promise for post-war decoration and industrial finishing

Germ-proof paint?

● "After the war can I have my rooms decorated with germ-proof paint?" Very likely—at the moment we cannot say—but if so—Berger will supply the paint

Berger Paints

Lewis Berger & Sons, Ltd., London, Birmingham, Glasgow, Dublin, Durban
Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Wellington
Depots at Bristol, Cardiff, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, Newcastle



Connoisseurs
Commend

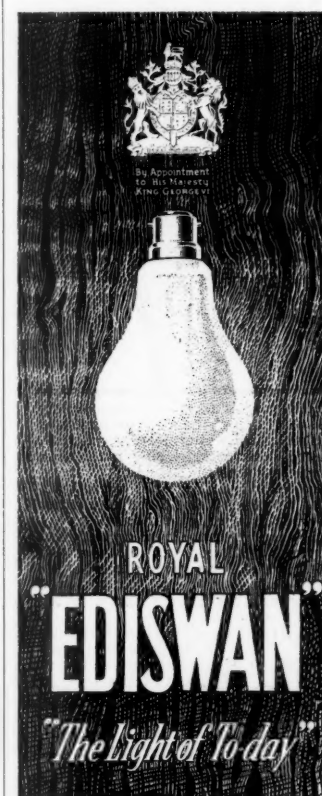
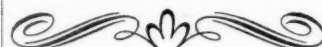


The Connoisseur appreciates instantly the Bouquet of the Genuine choice wines blended into this true Vermouth. Here is a choice and healthful aperitif or with added ingredients a delightful cocktail.

Treasures need seeking—but ask your Wine Merchant about Vamour—he may be able to supply you from his limited stock.



Produced by
VERMOUTIERS (London) LTD.
SACKVILLE HOUSE, PICCADILLY, W. 1



Advertisement of
THE EDISON SWAN ELECTRIC CO. LTD.
155, Charing Cross Rd., London, W.C.2 (L.34)

RATTRAY'S
OLD GOWRIE
TOBACCO

The inevitable choice of pipe smokers of discrimination is Rattray's OLD GOWRIE. Here is a tobacco that has retained its pre-war quality and flavour—a tobacco that truly brings solace and enjoyment. Like all good things, its lasting qualities mean a wise economy in the end.

A customer writes from SCONE—"Rattray's tobacco in war-time must be reserved for special occasions and only for such time as one can concentrate upon its fine fragrance."

A customer writes from ALDERSHOT—"Your tobacco is a beautiful cured leaf indeed and grandly blended."

A customer writes from near AXMINSTER—"I find that your tobacco is economical, as it lasts so long and is so much more enjoyable."

Obtainable only from

Chas. Lawley
Tobacco
Blender



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Price: 40/- per lb., Post Paid
Send 12/3 for sample 1-lb. tin, Post Free.

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*The greatest name
in jam making
for over 70 years*



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LATE KING GEORGE V

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of fine Sauces,
Fish and Meat
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Essence
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BURGESS
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DOGS
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SPILLERS
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shaving at
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including
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Obtainable only from Retailers.
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TODAY'S DISCOVERIES

TOMORROW'S POSSIBILITIES

Temperature control is assisting the tasks of the scientific engineer to-day as it assisted the work of the housewife before the war. Experience gained under the drive of national necessity will find interesting applications to post-war development. And not least in building up new standards of food cleanliness, family health and domestic convenience in the new and better homes of Britain.

Shrink-fitting, oil-bath cooling, and reproduction of stratosphere conditions are examples of modern industrial work undertaken by Prestcold temperature control.

PRESTCOLD REFRIGERATION

A product of **PRESSED STEEL COMPANY LIMITED**



**EAT LESS
BREAD.**

Remember—
quality is
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Hovis

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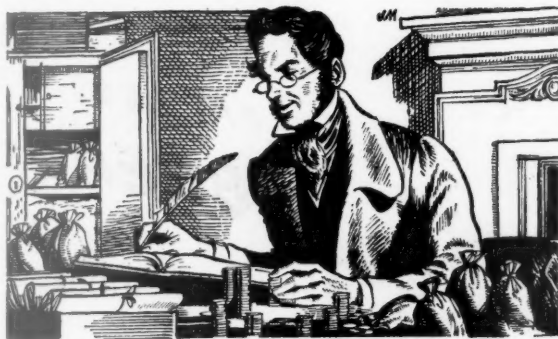
BEST BAKERS BAKE IT

Macclesfield

Keep up your salvage
with persistence -



Keep up your ENERGY
with BOVRIL



THE LONDON BANKER

The squeaking of a quill pen . . . spluttering radiance of the newly-invented gas-light . . . the soft, heavy clink of gold coinage . . . from outside, the clatter of hooves on a cobbled street . . . an office of the London and Westminster Bank in the 1830's.

THE tempo of business was slower, in an age which knew neither telephones nor typewriters—when the invitation to enjoy the 'hospitality of the Manager' was the normal conclusion to a successful transaction. These early days in the Bank's history now seem incredibly remote. Yet throughout the intervening years, which brought greater changes than did those of any previous century, the policy of the Westminster Bank has marched with the times; it aims to provide a complete banking service, based on the highest traditions of integrity and fair dealing.

WESTMINSTER BANK LIMITED

May good digestion wait on appetite
And health on both . . .

McVITIE & PRICE'S DIGESTIVE BISCUITS

During these days of strict rationing it is imperative that we should choose foods for their health-giving value and for their ready digestibility.

McVitie's Digestive Biscuits fulfil these conditions to perfection.

Production is now restricted and distribution limited to certain areas, but if you can get McVitie's Digestive Biscuits you'll find it well worth while.

McVITIE & PRICE LTD.

EDINBURGH • LONDON • MANCHESTER

Keep digging for Victory

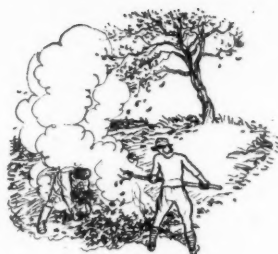
We are winning, but don't relax. Don't stop digging. Don't neglect those gardens and allotments which have helped the Nation's food supply so much during four years of war. Get your ground in good shape. And aim for an even bigger crop yield. *Batchelor's* Canned

Fruits and Vegetables are now difficult to obtain, simply because the Nation's final spurt to Victory is taxing labour and shipping resources to the utmost.

One day you'll be able to obtain all you require



Batchelor's
ENGLISH CANNED
FRUITS & VEGETABLES



PUNCH

or

The London Charivari



Vol. CCV No. 5358

October 20 1943

Charivaria

WE gather from the orders regarding the resumption of central heating in offices next month that the summer is definitely drawing to a close.

We would advise all those who wish to shop and post early for Christmas in order to avoid the rush to take their places in the queues at once.



"To make yourself a globe, first cut up an old atlas," says a writer. That's as far as the Fuehrer got.

Some people have the wireless in their bathrooms. We have nothing but scorn for the man who lounges in 5 inches of warm water when he ought to be doing radio exercises on the chilly dining-room floor.

Minority Report

"The second and third are common sense, but opinions differ on what constitutes sensible food. In my informant's view it includes eating Crean and his Orchestra."—*Notts. Paper*.

"The wasp is generally fiercer at the end of the summer than at the beginning," says an entomologist, apropos of this year's shortage. It is invariably fiercer at the end of the wasp.

Paquis, Paris radio commentator, says "The German High Command has never concealed its intention of surprising the world." The road towards the surprise is paved with their previous intentions.

Mussolini's efforts to develop his Republican Fascist Party are described as a fiasco. It is rumoured that Hitler may shortly direct German paratroops to put the ex-Duce back where they found him.

German radio commentators are said to be very conceited and jealous of each other. We hear that one of them has been boasting of late that he has been off the air more times than all the others put together.

The 440-yard Dash

"A girl is walking down a wide white corridor. The corridor is a quarter of a mile long and smells of ether and antiseptic, and the girl covers the length of it in two minutes."

Newspaper report of Broadcast.

"If any German looks crestfallen, then he is either a mental case or an intentional traitor," says a German newspaper quoted by Reuter. The correct way for a German to receive the news of the reverses of the *Wehrmacht* is with a broad grin.



The Germans have forbidden conjuring performances in Denmark. We doubt if Danish audiences will mind. By now they must be very tired of watching the German version of the Disappearing Egg Trick.

"An early winter is always possible," says a country correspondent. We hear of a particularly energetic farmer who has already dug himself out of a drift of forms with which he was snowed under by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Mrs. Chamberlain, mayor of Bangor, is reported as saying that no woman would dream of designing the type of agricultural cottages approved by the Government. She is too late—the Government is now dreaming of building them.

Owing to coupon difficulties football clubs find it hard to replace players' jerseys. It is not expected, however, that rugby tackling will be any gentler this season.



That Other War

LET us now examine the morale of the Japanese Army. Many facts are well known and agreed upon by nearly all commentators. They may be summed up briefly as follows.

The Japanese dislike conscription because it interferes with their educational curriculum.

The Japanese intend to conquer Asia—or maybe merely the world.

The aim of the Japanese soldier is to die. ("When a recruit joins the Japanese Army the first thing he is taught is that he must look upon dying as a duty. This is impressed upon him constantly not only in verbal exhortations, but by posters which are stuck up in every barrack-room." So at least says Mr. John Morris, who has lately left Tokyo, in a book called *Traveller From Tokyo*.)

The Japanese Emperor, Hirohito, the Son of Heaven, is omnipotent, a descendant of the Gods and powerless in the hands of the Japanese Army, which overrides all political opposition by having direct access to the Emperor.

The Emperor is not a fighting man himself. He is a quiet, studious person interested in marine biology. (I tried to explain these words myself to a bus-conductor, but I do not think I made myself entirely clear. "I take you," he said. "Fond of fish. Why don't they say so then?" But I fancy it goes deeper than this.)

The strongest armies of Japan have not yet been engaged, either against China, or the American or our own Imperial troops. They are in Manchuria waiting for the Russians.

The proper investigation of all these facts demands, I think, something like a Socratic dialogue.

Would you then say, Thrasymachus, that the soldier, who does not wish to become a soldier but when enlisted wishes immediately to die is a better soldier than one who wishes, if possible, to live?

I sure would.

And if being a recruit he is constantly urged to die will he therefore be a more obedient and better disciplined soldier?

Certainly.

But in that case being commanded shall we say to peel potatoes or to cook rice will he not reply to the one who is commanding him: "No, Corp, not likely. Potatoes and rice merely serve to keep me alive which is contrary to my ambition"? Or being instructed by the one who is instructing him that his rifle is his best friend and should be kept free from rust and mud will he not answer: "My rifle, Sarge, is not my best friend but my worst enemy, for by the efficient use of it I may prolong my life. But if, on the other hand, it explodes I shall obtain my chief desire, which is to die"? And this being so, must we not admit that obedience and the discipline of a Japanese soldier will be of a very peculiar kind?

We must.

And again, if he reaches the battlefield will he not, instead of fighting valiantly, so as to be in danger of victory and survival, waste his ammunition at the earliest possible opportunity, so as to be more easily killed by the enemy, and if he is hidden by leaves or bushes will he not cry out "Here am I. Do not omit to destroy me," lest he should escape notice, remaining alive?

There is a risk.

The best Japanese soldier will therefore, I take it, be the one who throwing aside his arms runs swiftly towards the

enemy seeking death, and if in one way he passes through the enemy's ranks, turns round and runs back again saying "You have forgotten me. Shoot better this time." Or perhaps not trusting the enemy he will throw himself down a deep gorge or over a precipice into the sea, or into a swamp infested by crocodiles, hoping that these animals, not being fastidious, will devour him. For otherwise he is in peril of returning from battle not even wounded, but rather having conquered his opponents and having incurred the disgrace of continuing to breathe.

It looks like it.

Yet it seems clear that the Japanese soldier does not always behave in this way?

Apparently not.

We must then revise our opinion, Thrasymachus, about the extent of the Japanese soldier's desire for death. And if we go on to consider the position of the Japanese Emperor shall we not also say that it is foolish of this person, being omnipotent and a child of the Gods, and not desirous of wars, to become powerless in the hands of the army, instead of demanding a Charter for the Better Protection of Gods, and saying to all citizens: "Let us make a rebellion against the Army and take away its arms." For thus he will not only gratify his sense of omnipotence but also be able to go on quietly studying fish.

It seems possible.

Or if on the other hand his omnipotence, and the wishes of the people and his love for fish are too weak to oppose the desires of the Army, will they not insist that he must go into battle with them, so that being all-powerful and the Son of Heaven, he will be able to conquer the world, or die, or both, in the interest of the Army to which he is enslaved?

That would be reasonable.

And seeing that the strongest part of these armies is said to be in Manchuria, where they neither conquer nor die, but perhaps only wait to conquer and die, whether or not they are interested in marine zoology, is it not likely that the whole purpose of the Japanese war has not yet been revealed, and would it not be foolish to commit ourselves and our allies to employ all our forces against these people, until we have destroyed our other enemies?

Perhaps.

And we shall not be induced to divert our full strength against this curious nation until we are free from other difficulties, no not even if Five Senators from America were to tell us that we ought to do so?

I have a kind of feeling, Socrates, that your strange method of argument—

Stay, Thrasymachus. Here is the nine o'clock news.
O.K., Soc. EVOE.

Night Piece

HERE are red flowers and fruit. And golden grapes

Descend in clusters from no earthly vine,

And brighter than the stars are flying shapes

Held where the lifted pathways intertwine,

And shouting from their beds the meteors rise

To catch the illuminated butterflies.



THE GREAT TWIN BRETHREN

"And for the right we come to fight
Before the ranks of Rome."

Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome."



"I wish they'd have their Board Meetings when they GET to Town!"

English Islands or Lost off Labrador

III

ABOUT half an hour ago you could just see a small rock outside the entrance to our haven, or prison. The fog, we thought, might be beginning a retreat.

You cannot see it now.

This morning the skipper said the wind had veered a little, away, that is, from the filthy east towards the benignant west, from which, one day perhaps, a wind may rise and blow the fog away. We looked at the binnacle, and, sure enough, the ship's head, lying to the wind, was pointing S $\frac{1}{2}$ W, instead of the usual 146° or S.E. by S.

I ventured to point out to the skipper that, even so, since in these parts the magnetic variation of the compass is about 35° W., the true

direction of the ship's head and the abominable wind was still about 149°, or S.E. by S $\frac{1}{2}$ S. The captain agreed.

It does not matter much, because we are now back to 146°, by the compass.

It is tiresome, rather, the magnetic variation here. As if there was not enough trouble in these waters with icebergs, rocks and fog, the compass when it points to north is really pointing 35° west of north. What does that mean? Well, it means, I suppose, that if it were at Piccadilly Circus and pointing to the north up Shaftesbury Avenue, the north would really be down—what is it? Cranbourn Street?—towards Leicester Square. Do you follow, Bobby? I may have got the angle wrong, but it is so long since I

saw Piccadilly; and I must not write about it any more, or I shall cry.

The local mariners describe every direction by compass, and never by true bearings, which is trying for a well-brought-up English seaman who is accustomed only to the terms of truth. They will insist that "the north is over there" (because their compass points that way) when you know perfectly well that it is over there.

However, they do manage to get about the sea with considerable success and sureness. Our captain is a marvel. I believe he knows the name of every rock, reef, island, bight, bay, head and inlet on the Labrador Coast—at least from Battle Harbour to Nain—and that takes some knowing. In a single

degree of latitude I have counted 150 names; and it is more than four degrees of latitude—250 miles—from Battle Harbour to Nain.

We must have passed ten thousand islands, threading our way through them like a thirsty man through the foyer crowd on a first night. All the way—and he has carried us 670 miles—he has only once referred to a chart. I know that, for he lent his charts to me. When I have worked out my sextant sights (and don't laugh—they come out fine in spite of the prodigious rolling of this small vessel) I pop along and ask the captain where we really are. Always without hesitation he looks at the next grey rocky promontory, the next grey group of islands—and all of them look much alike, especially through mist and rain—and says, "That's Cut Throat Island—or Comfort Bight—or Indian Tickle—or Big Black Head." I have never known him to fail. And after many years of steaming up and down our little London River I am never quite sure which is Stoneness and which is Broadness.

The names are attractive, both here and in Newfoundland. I like Admiral's Bald Head Cape, and Seldom Come By, and Come by Chance, and Heart's Delight, and Heart's Content, and the Annicopsquotch Mountains. These are all Newfoundland. So are Topsail and Gaff Topsail and Maintopsail, the names of heights. Everywhere on the charts you see the word "Tickle", which must, like so much of Newfoundland, have come from England. A tickle is any small passage between an island and the mainland, or between one island and another—Venison Tickle, Indian Tickle, Favourites Tickle, Windy Tickle, and a million more.

North of here the Eskimo begins to dominate the chart with such mouthfuls as Ticoralak, Ukalluktok, Napakatakalik, Anniwaktook, Ukasiksalik, Tunungayualuk, Kikkutaksoak and Nanuaklok. The Eskimo is fond of "Ks". And up there, by the way, I see the magnetic variation is 38 degrees west.

There must be more place-names in Labrador than there are inhabitants. If you saw the coast you would understand why. The east coast of Newfoundland is formidable and forbidding enough (unlike the gracious west) on a cold grey day; but it is a seaside park compared with the coast of Labrador. For one thing, in Newfoundland you keep seeing cosy-looking human habitations and settlements; for another, you see trees. The Labrador seems to go on for ever, an

endless procession of grey-green hills and rocks and headlands—occasional solitary shacks and hardly any trees. The latitude changes constantly, the scenery never. The only refreshing spectacle for the mariner is a new iceberg or a new whale; and I believe that in the far north the grey hills grow up into black and awe-inspiring mountains.

Mind you, it is "grand scenery," and looks better in the sun. (But hush—in Seal Islands we no longer speak of the sun.)

And this quite barren and hostile coast is fringed with innumerable islands—of every shape and size, from the wicked reef awash to the seven-mile island. As I said to the captain yesterday: "It is as if the Wagnerian gods had celebrated some giant's wedding along the coast and, using rocks and islands for confetti, had playfully sprinkled them along the street." He said "Yes, sir."

Between the islands and the mainland there are smooth passages—called "runs"—where the small boat can steam along for miles untossed by the tempestuous sea—and very welcome they are. But there is nothing on them but pink and grey rocks, grey moss, many attractive wild flowers and berries, a thin soggy soil, and a tuft or two of grass. But they support the tumbledown shacks of a few fishermen with toothache; and that is almost the extent of their contribution to man.

A Frenchman said it was the land God gave to Cain. And there is the old Eskimo poem:

*"I wonder more and more and more
Why God created Labrador."*

Seven hundred miles of this, I agree, is overdoing it. The explanation, if I have read aright a learned geologist's account, is this. All these parts were once covered by a gigantic ice-cap, which after a very long time decided to shift, and did shift, in all directions. The glaciers which crunched their way south deposited their moraine, their crushed debris and collected soil on the North American continent, which has been fertile ever since. The glaciers which ground across Newfoundland and Labrador swept all the goodness into the North Atlantic. And that is why agriculture is not the leading industry on the ocean coasts. In the west of Newfoundland there are good soil, fine farms and gardens, luscious vegetables and innumerable potatoes: and judging by some meals the good Dutch nurse gave us at North West River, they can grow a thing or two in the interior of Labrador. Inland, too, the picture is very different. There is

much timber (one day, perhaps, to be turned into leading articles) and magnificent views. And minerals, too, it seems, in which Canada, at least, is showing some interest, if we are not. But the coast marks the last triumphant scrape and shovel of the glaciers: and that is why it looks like that.

If I am wrong, blame the geologist, not me.

But there may be compensations. Why is the magnetic variation of the compass 35-38 degrees west here when it is only 10-11 degrees west in England? I think I know the official answer, that the magnetic pole lies to the N.N.W. of Hudson Bay.

But I have another explanation, Bobby. The Newfoundlanders, many of them, still believe that there are masses of undeveloped minerals in the island—gold, copper, coal, asbestos, petroleum. No one in authority has yet been able to confirm this; but it may be so. And that, Bobby, might explain the antics of the compass!

Meanwhile, the fog is as thick as ever; it is still raining and blowing; it is very cold. It is August 20th. I have an uneasy feeling that that ice-cap may be on its way back.

A. P. H.

Maclellan's Come Back to His Own.

MACLELLAN's come back to his own;
Let those give news of him who can,
He will not say what he has known,
Ever he was a silent man;

And scarce more silent now he comes
Around the grey and misted peaks
To the lone sound of the wind's drums,
The same grey shadow on his cheeks.

O, have no grief, ye heathered fells!
He has come back in all his pride;
In his own quietude he dwells
And with contentment so to bide;

And asks no kindness of the sun;
Let any who tell battles o'er
Tell of the deeds Maclellan's done:
Maclellan will speak nevermore.

Impasse

"Mr. Noel-Baker, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of War Transport, stated in the House of Commons that in view of the priority demands for military traffic the Government could not provide extra trains for military traffic."—*Egyptian Paper*.

Six Hundred Thousand Pipes, an' A'

VISIONS assail me of the fate, the individual fate, of those 600,000 pipes made from Algerian briar which the Board of Trade promises will be on sale before Christmas.

By the way, I never knew this before, but it seems, according to a reader of *The Star* quoted in the "Star Man's Diary," that "the world got the briar-pipe habit from Corsica." Apparently a French notary visiting Ajaccio about 1820 to look at the home of the parents of Napoleon broke his porcelain pipe, and a local craftsman made him a new one from an old *bruyère* root. So started the chain of events now culminating in the lavish gesture of our own dear Board of Trade.

Looking at the figure 600,000 I cannot help thinking that there may be one for me. I haven't had a new pipe since June 1942, and for several months now I have been using up old ones, carelessly discarded years before that. One of those 600,000 . . . although the figure itself I suppose doesn't mean much. Even the B.B.C. Theatre Organ has, I believe (this is the number, right or wrong, that has stuck in my head for years) 1,826. I admit that those are a different kind, unsuitable for smoking, and with no tendency to crust inside with anything smaller than beetles, even if they had anything smaller than beetles at the B.B.C. This may be so, but still I shall never be very keen on organs.

Where was I?

I was being assailed, I see, by visions. My point is that I hope the 600,000 smokers will have some sense; but I know quite well that the fate of most of the pipes will be depressing for a scientific and considerate smoker to dwell on.

There are, of course, tips; but it is, of course, useless to bring them to the attention of the hardened or softened pipe-smoker, who has acquired his incredibly unhelpful habits only by dint of years of practice. Nothing will get him out of those: his attitude when respectfully advised will merely resemble that of the confirmed saucer-drinker who is told that the custom at Buckingham Palace is to drink, when convenient, from the cup.

I was very pleased some time ago to find that I had independently come to all the conclusions, and had for years been practising the smoking habits, recommended

by a personage described as "Old Hand" in a tobacco advertisement. All, that is, except that particular tobacco. But I am quite sure that the advice he gave about the way to fill and smoke a pipe had no effect, at least no permanent effect, on anybody except people at the very beginning of their pipe-smoking career.

I judge that about 341,125 of these new pipes will go to men who will stuff them with damp tobacco resembling plum-pudding, to one corner of which they will then casually apply a lighted match. As a result of this a tiny area of tobacco will smoulder for a while like one corner of a turf fire, and then go out. The same spot will then be lighted again, will stay alight for about as long as before, and again go out. In due course, after fifteen or twenty matches have been used, a charred channel will have wormed its way down one side of the bowl to the bottom; leaving about three-quarters of the original pipeful of tobacco, dry and hard as an old bit of sponge-cake, to be knocked out unburnt.

About another 221,633 will be bought by men who begin operations in the same way but are more determined. They will use five or six matches to get one or two other places alight besides the first corner, and when there is enough charred stuff and ash to knock off the top of the rest they will knock it off, ram some new tobacco into its place, and use five or six matches to light that. This can go on for days, the pipe being found at inactive moments lying about clogged thick with its noisome nameless compound of tobacco and ash like a boa-constrictor dead in the act of digesting a donkey. About once a month the pipe will be emptied and cleaned, returning to its labours considerably serrated round the edge. Pipes of this kind often end their days with the top of the bowl trimmed down to the level of the stem; unless the stem (as happens equally often) has been snapped by no less determined knocking-out.

37,241 or so will, according to my calculations (which are as good as yours), come into the possession of steady puffers who have not yet discovered that you should not smoke a new pipe while moving in the open air until it has a crust inside it. Until not so very long ago I was one of these myself, and as a result sooner or later burnt (besides every shred of every pipeful of tobacco, I grant you that) a neat round hole in the back of the bowl, above the stem, of nearly every pipe I had . . . except one that I bought in the year 1940, in Manchester, from what was described as "the only workshop in the country where briar pipes are still made by hand." The obliging maker personally spread the inside of the bowl with some kind of treacle which it seemed was to (and did) make it carbonize at once and not need "breaking in."

It may be that about 1950 some German lawyer, visiting whatever that place is in Austria to inspect with incredulity the home of Mr. and Mrs. Schicklgrüber, will drop his briar pipe and break it. Then will be the chance of some Austrian craftsman to make him a new one of plastics, or chromium steel, or cellophane, or whatever. Meanwhile I see there is one of that 600,000 left unaccounted for. That'll be mine: the one that will be smoked in the right way.

R. M.

THE MOST IDEAL GIFT

"THEY are the most ideal gift I have received, and just what we need for our job with the winter coming on us. So if you have any more to spare, do not forget us—we have a crew of over twenty."

So writes a recipient from the PUNCH COMFORTS FUND. We must respond to this further appeal. You would have us do so, we know, so please help us to meet the requirements of this tanker crew, and of all those in the Fighting Services who look to us for their extra comforts. Donations will be gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie St., London, E.C.4.

"To LET two furnished bedrooms, one with Piano, breakfast, or full board."—Adv. in "Egyptian Mail."
You can't have everything.

My Uncle's Silver Spoons

MY uncle is exceedingly proud of his flat, and the little board against his name in the entrance hall. My uncle considers that the act of sliding this from side to side, thus indicating whether he is in or out, shows that he has reached the pinnacle of respectability.

One morning, my uncle's friend mentioned to him that he always left his board showing "IN" when he was out, as it was his considered opinion that to advertise his flat's emptiness so blatantly was a direct invitation to burglars.

My uncle pondered deeply on this subject and decided upon its adoption; particularly as his set of silver spoons (won at a recent Bowls Competition) was left unguarded throughout the day. Accordingly, just as he was leaving for business the following morning, my uncle altered his little sign to show that he was in.

My uncle tells me that he found this most difficult to do, he being such a methodical man. He was, however, comforted by the thought that his action was making his silver spoons the safer.

During the day my uncle confided this plan to a colleague of his, who alarmed my uncle intensely by informing him that this ruse would instantly be seen through by any burglar worth his salt. My uncle's colleague went on to say that, in his own considered opinion, it would be a better plan were the board put to show "OUT" when my uncle was really in.

The cunning twist to this scheme, as my uncle's colleague saw it, was that any burglar visiting the flat when the sign said "OUT," and hearing noises within, would instantly decide that the time to effect his unheralded entrance was when the board showed "IN." All my uncle had to do, therefore, was to leave it permanently at "OUT."

My uncle required time to digest this profound thought and, in the stillness of his flat that evening, decided at last upon its instant adoption.

My uncle, a man of action, immediately started to descend the stairs to the entrance hall. Half-way down, he was annoyed to hear his front door slam shut. Knowing that he had left his keys inside, my uncle continued his journey to the porter's flat and borrowed a duplicate.



"What do you want us to do now?"

On his return, my uncle was considerably put out to discover that his journey had been wasted. His door still stood open. Evidently, thought my uncle, another door had been blown shut.

My uncle was also considerably put out to discover on entering his flat that someone in his absence had walked off with his set of silver spoons.

My uncle now leaves the notice at "IN" when he is out and also when he is in. So hopeful is my uncle of the success of this plan that the poker is always at his side.

Week-End

AND this is peace. I thank you, heavenly powers!
Enormous darkness round my swirling head;
To-morrow's sun-bright untruncated hours;
Breakfast in bed.

Far from my heart be Monday's harrowing plunge;
My golden, captured peace already slipping;
The inefficient squeezing of the sponge;
The agony of tipping. F. C. C.



"Sorry, no glasses."

The Wireless

JOHN'S Aunt Mary has a wireless set. This does not make John's Aunt Mary anything unusual, nor does it make the wireless set anything unusual. It would have been like that anyhow. So many sets are. But as a cross-section of domestic life last Saturday evening is perhaps worth describing. Besides Aunt Mary there were John, on forty-eight hours' leave, and his wife Caroline, there because John was; I was there for no special reason, and there were also a Pilot-Officer whom Aunt Mary had said was lonely, a silly girl called Judith, and a Mrs. Hope, whom some of us earlier in the evening had given a critical rating of 34 degrees. She was taking gussets out of a shirt, or putting them in, which depressed us. Well, anyway, there we all were, and after supper, at about five to nine, Aunt Mary looked at the clock and said: "We mustn't miss the News."

"Okay, Auntie," said John, and turned the left-hand knob of the wireless set. There was a silence. It was quite a nice silence. But it began to get on our nerves.

"It has to warm up, hasn't it?" said Mrs. Hope. "Such a pity, I always think."

"How you're getting along," said John's aunt, fingering a gusset.

"It's quite successful, isn't it?" said Mrs. Hope. "It's one Bertie was so fond of, and, you see, I've taken out where it got ironed once"—she held up a scorched and tattered triangle, and some of us murmured sympathetically—"and took this one from another he wasn't so fond of"—

she unrolled it, and we murmured again—"and *that* one, don't you think, would make—"

There was a blaring roar from one corner of the room. John shot to his feet.

"Not the side knob, John, dear," said his aunt. "I *never* touch the side knob."

"But you must, Aunt Mary," said John. "It's the side knob that's doing it." He gave it a good hard twist. There was silence again. It was an even better silence.

"You see," said John's aunt.

"He's awfully clever really," said Caroline. "Aren't you, darling?"

"But the side knob is the volume," said John. "I was only turning it off so as to turn it off." By now the wireless was in voice again. Scratchily, and in billows, it was playing a dance tune, "Keep an Eye on Your Heart."

"Keep an Eye on Your Heart," said Judith. "It's quite old, isn't it?"

"It sounds a long way away," said Mrs. Hope to the Pilot-Officer, who dropped his book, I mean Aunt Mary's book, which he had been reading covertly, and said, "Rather! Doesn't it?" Actually, by now it sounded very near indeed, and the Pilot-Officer had to raise his voice and say it again.

"Oh, but I don't mean that side knob," cried John's aunt. "Of course I use *that* side knob. It's the *other* side knob I never touch. No, don't touch it, John, dear. You'll only regret it."

"But it makes it Brilliant or Mellow," said John, applying an eye to the surface. "You don't mean you never use the Brilliant and Mellow knob, Aunt Mary? Why, it makes all the difference."

"You see," said Caroline.

"Do you like being in the R.A.F.?" Judith said kindly to the Pilot-Officer, who was looking a bit shelved.

"I—," said the Pilot-Officer.

"Quiet, everyone!" said John. "You see what I mean, Aunt Mary. If you have it right over to Mellow, people sound as if they're talking down a jug, though with this orchestra here it's a bit better Mellow than Brilliant. Well, no, perhaps not all that Mellow, but you see what—"

"Are you sure you've still got the Forces, John, dear?" said Aunt Mary anxiously from the *Radio Times*. "Because if so you should be getting a dance band. I know that this is a dance band, but there's a dance band from the Home Service too, and if you've got the Home Service—"

"I Had the Craziest Dream," said Judith. "It's quite old, isn't it?"

"Now," said John. "If you only keep it exactly like this, and a bit round"—he revolved the set smartly, and a china dog shot out from behind it—"you'll be all right. It's the Home Service."

"Darling," said Caroline, "you are—"

"But I don't like the Home Service, John," said his aunt distractedly. "It goes on and off so. Listen."

"Sounds all right," said John. "It's a bit soft, but you don't want it loud."

"But it goes on and off so," said Aunt Mary firmly. "You listen."

We listened. We jumped.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," said Mrs. Hope. "It was only me, tearing." She held up the shirt Bertie was not so fond of. "Would you mind, I wonder," she said to the Pilot-Officer, "just taking a sleeve in each hand by the elbow and . . ." The rest was drowned.

"I see what you mean," said John, getting up again. "But if you ask me, there's something radically wrong with the whole set."

"Now, John darling," said Caroline.



"Don't keep leaning against that clean white cloth with your greasy hair."

"But, John," said his aunt wildly, glancing round at the clock.

"Seven minutes fast," said John. "I'm only looking, anyway."

"Turn the switch in the wall off first and take the plug out," cried his Aunt Mary. "Whatever you do, John, don't get electrocuted."

"I wasn't going to," said John rather crossly, as he felt along the skirting-board. There was a click, and we were in darkness.

"Oh, dear," said Aunt Mary. "Judith dear, there's another lamp just behind you."

"We can't see quite so well now, can we?" said Mrs. Hope to the Pilot-Officer, who sat down tentatively, still holding the shirt to his chest.

"I never know how anyone can tell which wire is which," said Judith admiringly.

"Well, you can't, of course," said John with surprising frankness. "Not unless you're a pro."

"John!" cried his aunt. "Then I really don't think—"

"Oh, it's all right, Auntie," said John. "I can tell if they look wrong. The trouble is that they look right."

"There!" said Aunt Mary. "What did I tell you?"

"Just under a minute to," said the Pilot-Officer, removing Bertie's shirt-sleeve from his wrist-watch.

"John, dear!" said Aunt Mary. There was a new note of pleading in her voice.

"It's all right," said John. "I'm just making certain. Yes. There's something frightfully wrong somewhere, but it's inside." He turned the set round again.

"My Staffordshire dog," said John's aunt.

"Sorry," said John, picking it up. "Well, I'll put it back at the Forces, but what I say is—"

The light went on again.

"Ah!" said Mrs. Hope to the Pilot-Officer, who stood up obediently.

There was a silence.

"Oh, dear," said John's aunt.

The Pilot-Officer dropped a shirt-sleeve. "About a fifth of a minute more," he said. "No. A bit less."

"It'll hot up quicker this time," said John, dropping into an arm-chair. "And Big Ben takes ages."

We waited. The wireless seemed to gather itself together. There was a hum. There was a crash. John shot from his chair.

"You see what I mean about Mellow," he said. He twiddled the side knob. The next crash was better. The next was better still. It was a bit scratchy, and it billowed a trifle. But Aunt Mary summed it up nicely.

"There now," she said happily. "Now it's the way it always is."

Night Train

ENTER one Waaf, with mussed metallic hair.

Shall we make room? She makes herself room, sweetly

But ruthlessly. Miasmic is the air.

Slops from a flask bedew my Dennis Wheatley.

A Pole makes love to a bored girl, discreetly.

Abandoned bottles clink below the seats.

The oxygen has now run out completely,

But still one breathes, or snores, or somehow eats.

Scotland discovers us stiff-stretched and still.

As condensation floods each window-sill

I turn a knob to "HOT" and it grows colder.

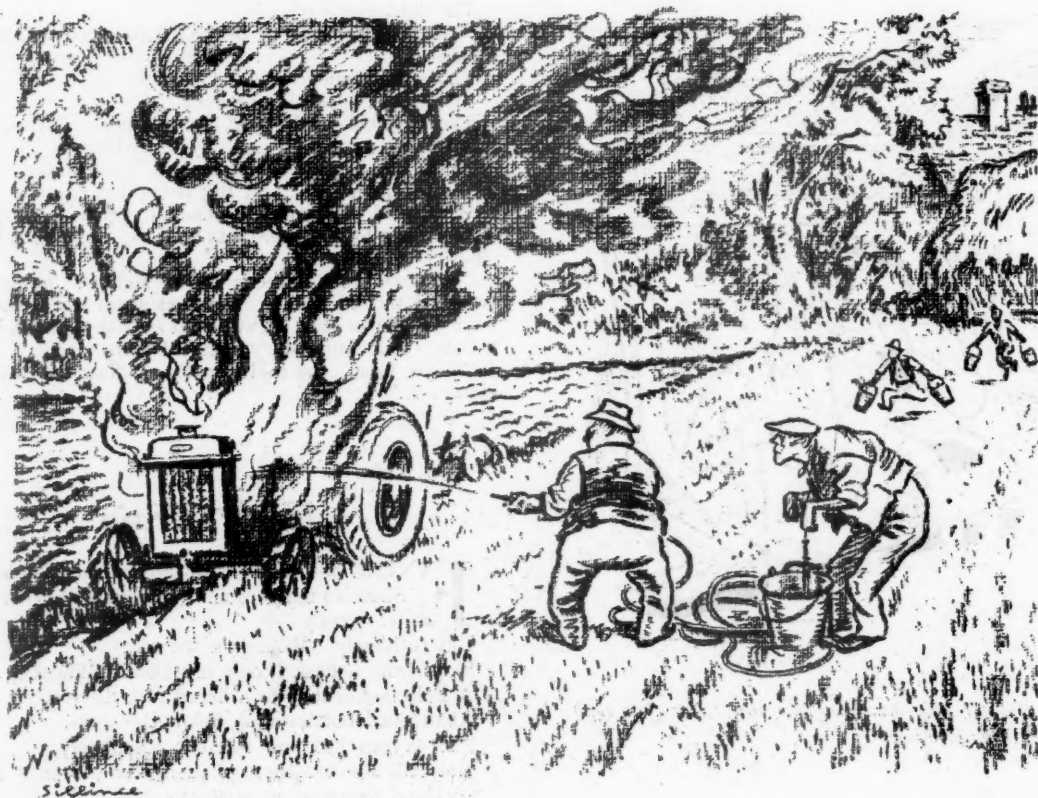
But do not think I have the worst of it:

There is a Wren, a young soft-scented chit,

Asleep with her red head upon my shoulder.



"Smashing dinner—some kind of meat-pie stuff, sort of mashed potatoes, kind of stewed fruit and custard or something."



"Never did trust these damned internal-combustion engines!"

The Phoney Phleet

XXXII—H.M.S. "Blotless"

CAPTAIN ("Tiddley") Copal
Should have been a saint.
He had *two* religions,
The other one was Paint.

His ship, H.M.S. *Blotless*,
Dazzled one and all,
Like that classic dame whose
Name I can't recall.

For twenty-seven months or
Twenty-eight, maybe,
Redolent and shining
Blotless stayed at sea.

Then she entered harbour.
Tied up to the side,
Portions of the paint got
Badly scarified.

This was Captain Copal's
Earthly view of Hell,
So he hung out fenders
Painting *them* as well.

When, in turn, the fenders'
Paintwork was destroyed,
Further *fender-fenders*
Were at once deployed.

These again had *their* paint
Promptly knocked about.
Fender-fender-fenders
Had to be hung out.

So *ad infinitum*,
More and more and more,
Till the ship was fendered
Several miles off shore.

Nutriments and victuals
Couldn't reach her side,
Hence from slow starvation
Captain Copal died.

Treasure up this story,
Take it to the grave,
Be the Paint-pot's Master—
Never be its slave.

Do not worship idols ;
One and one make two ;
Cleanliness is godly.
THAT WILL DO.

"4 Ye Olde Louis XV pieces, inlaid, by
Buhl."—*Advt. in "Evening News."*
Not dear old Ye Olde Buhl?



TWO CELLARS

"I thought that would warm you, Sir: I'm sorry not to be able to manage a little more coal as well."

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, October 12th.—House of Commons: Coal Debate.

Wednesday, October 13th.—House of Commons: Coal Again.

Thursday, October 14th.—House of Commons: The New Tax Scheme.

Tuesday, October 12th.—King Edward III had a considerable Parliamentary triumph in the House of Commons to-day, and was loudly cheered for his foresight in concluding a treaty with Portugal. Mr. CHURCHILL, looking gravely over his glasses, announced to an excited and expectant House that His Majesty's treaty, signed with KING FERDINAND and QUEEN ELEANOR of Portugal, had, like some tropical tree, suddenly borne rare and refreshing fruit after some 600 years.

The House gasped a bit, and wondered whether Mr. CHURCHILL had made a mistake in the date. But not at all. Not for nothing is Portugal given the proud title of "Britain's oldest ally," and it was, in very truth, the Treaty of 600 years ago—of 1373, to be precise—that was now being invoked.

And, as in the past, the invocation was not in vain.

Portugal, neutral with our full approval, was once more proving herself a useful, as well as a faithful, ally, for she was to give us . . .

Members leaned forward eagerly, and there was a deep silence. The Duke of PALMEIRA, Portugal's Ambassador to London, smiled down from his seat in the Diplomatic Gallery, and Mr. CHURCHILL looked up at him. Then the Premier went slowly on with his announcement.

. . . Portugal was to give us the use of the Azores (he pronounced it "Ay-zores"), those invaluable islands in the Atlantic discovered by intrepid Portuguese sailors some 700 years ago and held by their country ever since.

There was a delighted roar of applause, which seemed to startle the Ambassador. Mr. CHURCHILL, beaming around, waited for silence and then went on to say how great an asset this concession would be to the United Nations in fighting the U-boat menace to our shipping in the Atlantic. We, in turn, were to give essential supplies and equipment to the Portuguese armed forces.

We should occupy the Azores only temporarily, and, as soon as the fighting ended, we should hand them

back, with many thanks, to their original proprietors. And Portugal would remain neutral.

As one Member remarked, Britain's bread, cast upon the waters six centuries ago, had returned thickly buttered, with a non-rationed portion of jam in addition. The treaty provided that "as true and faithful friends, Britain and Portugal shall henceforth be friends to friends and enemies to enemies, and shall assist, maintain and uphold each other mutually by sea and by land against all men that may

and to-day had one mildly suggesting that the British and United States air forces "should be brought up to strength to bomb Germany at saturation point, and thus, by destroying her main sources of production, bring about her early defeat with a minimum loss of man-power."

There was a gleam in the Premier's eye as he rose, turning over his notes. Mr. PURBRICK went red. He knows that look—and what usually follows. He was right; it did follow.

"Yes," said Mr. CHURCHILL. "This seems to express the general idea very cogently!"

Mr. PURBRICK gasped, the rest of the House yelled with laughter, Mr. CHURCHILL turned to the next question. It was about a speech by Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, the Home Secretary (sitting watchfully by his side), on the desirability of controls on this, that and the other after the war. Did this, Sir HERBERT WILLIAMS asked, represent the policy of the Government?

A bird of the P.M.'s downiness does not need even to see the trap to avoid it. A certain divergence of political view, or at least of emphasis, quoth he, sweetly, was indispensable to political sincerity. However—and here he looked meaningfully at Sir HERBERT—he hoped Party controversies would be avoided at present "as this is a time when all combative impulses should be reserved for the enemy."

Laughter, in which, as they say in the police-court reports, the accused joined. Mr. CHURCHILL rejected the time-honoured advice of one of his predecessors in office that all Ministers should say the same thing—whatever it was. That, he said, would be to impose undue rigidity on Ministers.

A sigh of relief ran along the Treasury Bench.

The House then talked about coal, and seemingly the situation in that essential industry is black. Major GWILYM LLOYD GEORGE, the Minister of Fuel, had to defend the Government as the lone occupant of a Government Front Bench whence all but he had fled. His brief was not exactly crammed with comforting facts for the critics who sat opposite, looking for comforting facts in large and unrationed quantities. We wanted more coal, and we had to have it. But we could not release many ex-miners from the Services. So we should have to direct into the mines men who might otherwise have been directed into the Services. And he was sure that, as ever, the miners would deliver the goods, in spite of difficulties, in spite of everything. Meanwhile, everybody could help by going easy with the coal-scuttle, even



"NOW THEN, ME LUCKY LADS!"

"It would now be necessary to call up men for the Coal Mines in the same way as they were called up for the Armed Forces." Major Lloyd George.

live or die." The House clearly felt that it had been honoured in full.

Mr. CHURCHILL had had a good time, even before he made his announcement. While Mr. ANTHONY EDEN is away in Moscow he is acting Foreign Secretary and Leader of the House, and he took all the questions pertaining to those two offices.

When the P.M. is pleased with life, he shows it, and in showing it adds considerably to the gaiety of the Grand Inquest of the Nation, if not always to that of individual Members who (like individual Members of the rock-throwing assembly in the poem) "happen to be meant."

Take Mr. REGINALD PURBRICK, for instance. He rather specializes in the (shall we say?) less original questions,



"Yes, I first started collecting them when I was eight."

easier with luxuries like strikes and disputes which cut down production.

Major GWILYM, who is probably the most popular man in the Commons (jointly with JIMMY MAXTON) quite evidently did not like the emaciated case he had to present. Nor did the critics. It is a tribute to his popularity that, one and all, the critics proclaimed that it was not the Minister they were criticising, but the War Cabinet, his masters. Let them come forth and show themselves, they said, and they should see what they should see!

The Minister certainly made the most of a case that was perhaps a little threadbare, and the numerous members of his family among his audience (Mr. DAVID LLOYD GEORGE sitting attentively opposite, Miss MEGAN looking on with unconcealed sisterly pride from the Liberal benches, Major GORONWY OWEN a little way away, and Mrs. GWILYM in the Speaker's Gallery) were not the only ones to beam their congratulations.

Wednesday, October 13th.—To-day Mr. CHURCHILL delivered a learned discourse on the origins, causes and

results of that natural phenomenon, the National Government, and pointed out that, if we are to avoid the worst horrors of peace, as we had so successfully (thus far) averted the worst horrors of war, brotherly love between the Parties must continue.

The miners' M.P.s sat opposite glumly. They knew that the "crisis" was over, for Mr. CHURCHILL's mastery of the House is complete, and what he says "goes" in the most absolute way.

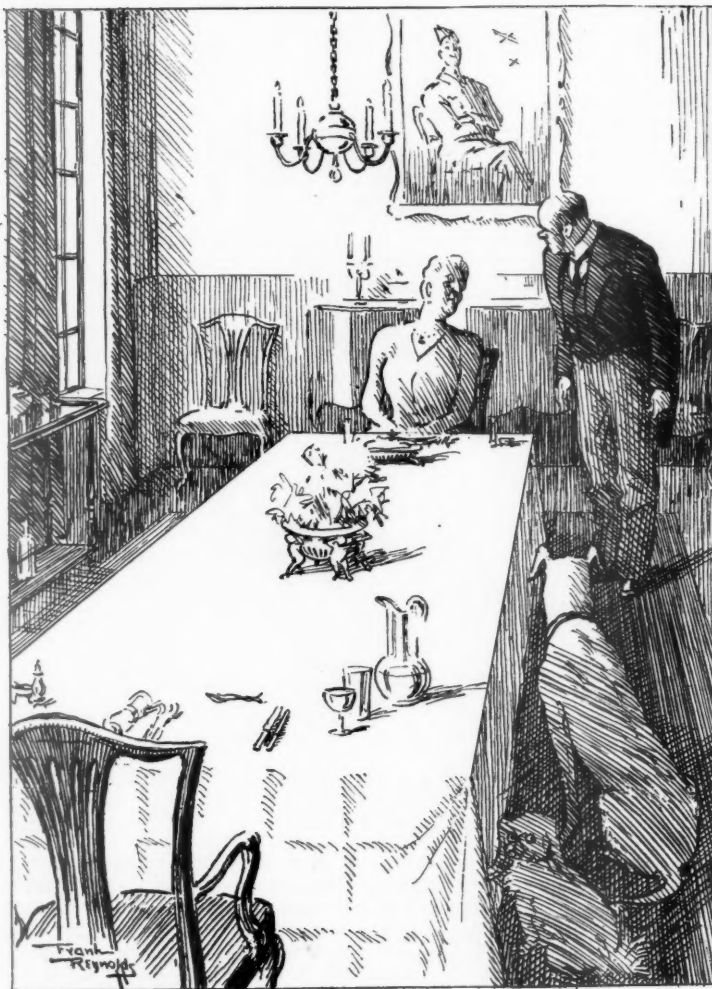
Some time or other, said the P.M., non-committally, the war would be over, and then there would be a General Election. That was the time to raise the nationalization issue, and to let the country decide on it. If the country said "Yes" the Government would say "Yes" too. But, meantime, there were more urgent things to hand; bloody fighting, for instance, and a life-and-death struggle with the foe, and the need to make a wise and lasting peace.

There could be no question of this far-reaching change while the war lasted. It was the conduct of the war first, last and all the time, and nothing—nothing—must obstruct the British dog's view of the Axis rabbit.

Meanwhile he complimented everybody concerned—Major LLOYD GEORGE, the miners, and the domestic coal-user. After his speech, the Labour Members, led by eloquent Mr. DAI GRENFELL, who began to work in the pits when he was eight, went through the movements of their drama, but everybody had sneaked a look at the climax, knew the Government was not murdered in the end, and lost interest. The old drama of the Eternal Triangle—Conservatism, Socialism and Nationalization—will be played out in earnest some time in the future.

As it was, Major LLOYD GEORGE, winding up, left ample time for the "rebels" to rebel, but they did not, and a Conservative Member gently raised complaint of the indifferent public transport facilities available in far-away Yorkshire. So ended a crisis.

Thursday, October 14th.—Sir JOHN ANDERSON, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, presented the "pay-as-you-earn" income-tax scheme, explaining as he went. Other Members complained as they went that its scope was too limited, but the Bill got its Second Reading.



"Tell Sir Charles that if he's not down in five minutes he's had it."

Fraternizing

WHEN you've told a foreign soldier his English is perfect and that you couldn't speak Norse or Polish or whatnot half so well, there seems nothing more to say.

Thanking you carefully, he tells you he has been in the country three years and always he learns the language.

Now what are you going to do?

You rack your brains for points of contact. Poland—Warsaw—Concerto: check. Polish—Corridor—Steppes. It's like an association test and just as barren.

"Very good, indeed, your English is."

"Thank you."

"No accent at all."

The racking goes farther and faster. *Gazetta Polska*. You have it. Gdynia, Chopin and that writer chap.

But can you hurl a newspaper, a port and a composer at him? "You won't see much of Chopin, these days."

"How you must miss the up-to-date dock and harbour facilities of Gdynia—particularly now you can't get the *Gazetta Polska*." It's on that kind of lunacy your mind trembles as you sit opposite him in the canteen, trying hard to be matey.

"Three years, you said? You've made good progress in that time."

"Thank you. Sometimes I have a difficulty with words, but always I carry a dictionary."

"A dictionary, eh? Very handy to have." You imply that all well-dressed Englishmen carry dictionaries.

"I sometimes think . . ." A plunge in the dark. What do you sometimes think? Something rather apt about Chopin typifying the unconquerable spirit of Poland. That tune of his, now. How does it go?

"Please?"

"I sometimes think"—(that never blows so red the rose, races your fickle mind)—"think that a nation's life finds expression in its songs."

"A nation's life . . .?" he echoes with polite anxiety.

"Comes out in its songs."

"Comes about . . .?"

"In its songs (*dash it!*). That thing of Chopin's now. How does it go? *Tum, tum-tum tum tum*. Do you know it?"

And you sing him a Maori folk-tune.

"Chopin?" he queries with bewildered gravity.

"I'm afraid my voice . . . How is your President these days?"

"Thank you. I have not seen him while I am in England."

Sometimes I have a go at the French, in French. But their minds don't run on my simple concepts—aunts packing trunks and Madame at the shop. We take the deep waters of London night-life or the shoals of French North Africa. I do my best.

"A man remarkable, Lyautey."

"Who?"

"Lyautey."

"Oh, Lyautey!" He laughs, Frenchly. Why should he? I bet I got it right, like Eliza.

"And messieurs the Generals, de Gaulle and Giraud."

"Yes?"

"Remarkable men, too."

"*Vraiment*. Do you know the desert?"

"The desert," I say swiftly, "is deserted."

"That goes without saying."

Maybe: but I've got to say it. My choice isn't all that wide.

"You would like to go there?"

Eliza had an answer for that, too, but I don't know its French equivalent.

"No? Can you tell me, please," he continues, in English, of course, "how the trains run from Paddington? No? My friend invalided home from Tunisia convalesces in the West Country. I go to visit him."

"Your English is very good." It had to come.

"I am glad. I have passed three years in England and I am learning always the language."

It's like swimming up a waterfall.

But to the determined, there's a third approach—the firm. I tried it on a Viking.

"*Hvordan star det il!*" I greeted him, sternly.

He returned it with a lilt.

I resumed in English, for sufficient reasons.

"The surface of Norway is mountainous," I said, "and its streams fall precipitously to deep fjords." I know because my aunt was there on a cruise.

"Yes?" said the Viking, rather dazed, I thought.

"These fjords shallow towards the entrance and their still waters harbour an abundance of fish."

"Fish—very nice—fish. In your country we cannot always get. . ."

But I was standing no nonsense from Norway. Fjords, not fish.

"At the head of these natural inlets providence has provided short stretches of flat land on which cluster the picturesque Norwegian houses—white against the green of the mountains and the aquamarine of the sea."

"Beautiful," said the Viking.

"I hoped you would feel something of her charm," I answered, modestly.

"Your description, I mean. Such beautiful English," responded the Viking.

"Ah," said I. "You see, I've lived all my life in this country and always I learn the language."

o o

The First of the 'Flu

I TOOK to my bed on Friday—a war casualty with a temperature stooging about at 102 degrees. On Friday it was a chill: on Saturday it was the 'flu.

Now a fevered condition in the body is often accompanied by remarkably improved powers of mental perception. On Saturday afternoon I felt a different man—no longer the humble artisan dredging for ideas in a mind like a derelict canal but a brilliant creative artist. I understood the full significance of my illness. I was the first of the 'flu. The war was over and the first post-war epidemic was about to rage with me as its chosen leader. I ordered my wife to tear down the

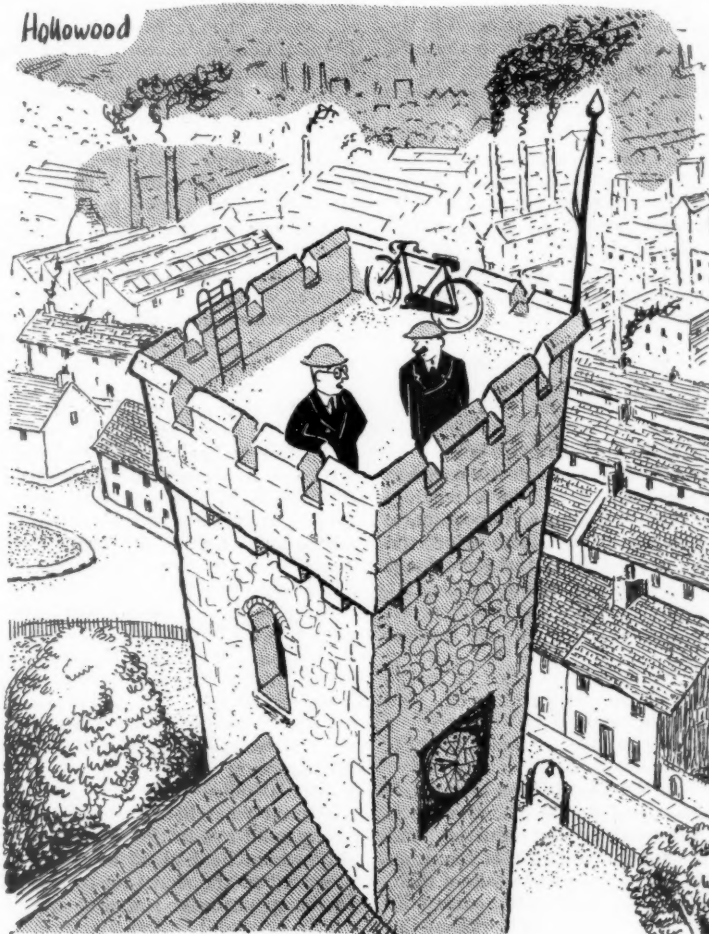
black-out curtains and to sew turn-ups on my pyjamas but for some reason or other she began at that moment to pull funny faces and to sway like a Polynesian flower-girl. Then she put the light out.

In spite of these obstructionist tactics my head continued to vibrate with ideas. Most of them were really powerful and of startling originality and could easily have been turned into acceptable articles. None of them, unfortunately, can be recaptured now that my temperature has been pegged at 98.4 degrees.

During my convalescence I began to think about *this* article. How pleasant to capitalize such bleak misfortune! How easy to invent pleasanties about the sick-room and its remorseless time-table! Here, I thought, was a ready-made subject for

once. And then, as I toyed with pad and pencil, I recalled with growing bitterness the numerous essays that I had read on the same topic. In no branch of literature is competition more severe than in articles dealing with the psychology of the sick. Is it because the average patient worries more about doctors' bills than possible clinical complications? If so, we have another good argument for a Free (Comprehensive) State Medical Service.

By the way, when I referred to myself as a war casualty I had no intention of setting myself up as a national hero. But I *was* speaking the truth. I caught my chill while standing in the rain immediately outside a military camp. I was trying to identify myself without an identity card to a conscientious but rather stupid guard.



"Of course, I've got the PUMP in my pocket."

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

At the Play

A GLANCE AT REPERTORY

A VULGAR fellow asked us the other day why we choose occasionally to turn aside from the London theatre to "crack up" repertory. The answer is simple and straight: Because most of the repertory companies are doing valuable war-time work in introducing great plays to audiences which have never seen or read them before. Last week we saw a performance of IBSSEN'S *Ghosts* at Amersham. Let it be said at once that the performance, with the exception of Miss LATIMER'S *Mrs. Alving*, was hardly "up to scratch." Let it be said secondly that even Miss LATIMER, though always intelligent and sometimes moving, did not urgently make us want to echo C. E. Montague's noble praise of Janet Achurch in the part.

("As happens at rare moments in the theatre, the emotion rose to the heat at which first it fuses into one whole, and then, to your sense, consumes clean away the very means of its own presentation—the force or music of words, the fine flexure of gesture and tone, the aptness of surroundings; tragedy burned up the lamp that had held it, and flamed like a star, unconditioned and absolute.")

It would be unreasonable to expect to be moved to such a fervour of fine prose in a little repertory theatre putting on a new play, in the teeth of all sorts of war-time difficulties, week by week; and we are not unreasonable playgoers. But even so this *Mrs. Alving* caught something which not one of the half-dozen more celebrated actresses we have seen in the part has ever succeeded so well in conveying. She caught the innate, importunate, highly poetical melancholy of the remarkable speech in the second act which explains the tragedy's title. At this point and for this long speech only, she modulated, in the musical sense, from the major key into a related minor. Call it trick or call it inspiration, this was certainly effective and as clever a thing as we have ever seen this handsome and always-interesting actress achieving.

Ghosts is the fourth Ibsen play which Amersham has staged (the theatre is about to give its 300th production) and the enthusiastic response is tempting the management to undertake a fifth, possibly *Rosmersholm*. We cannot be brought to see that it matters that the general standard of acting is not so high as the West End of London likes to be given. An Ibsen play, even if it

were only read by a bunch of village shopkeepers in overcoats, would give those good folks—and everybody intelligently listening to them—something to think about for the rest of their lives. Performed as they are at Amersham, at least with good intentions and all-round audibility, they amount to a boon and a blessing to Buckinghamshire.

Essex, on the other hand, inclines to Shakespeare and the modern French impressionism of M. Jean-Jacques Bernard. In Mr. DIGBY'S programme for the season just opened at the Colchester Repertory Theatre we find plays, too, by other writers as disparate as Mr. Milne, Mr. Ervine, Mr. Coward, Mr. van Druten, and Sir James Barrie. Last week this same attractive theatre—it is actually the town's art gallery turned into a playhouse—presented an entirely new piece, *This is My Life*, by MESSRS. BASIL THOMAS and R. F. DELDERFIELD. This was an intimate study of the private existence of hospital nurses. There was question of the disposal of an overbearing Sister. There was discussion of the sacrifices probationers must make who would learn to be good nurses. There was a decision approached, weighed, and concluded as to whether the Matron (aged 37) should give up her career and marry a young doctor (aged 28) who loved her. The leading actress at this theatre, Miss JOAN MACARTHUR, showed with a rare and most appealing sensitiveness how the Matron, not without a pang, chose to remain married to her career and found her suitor a better post in a different hospital far enough away to make her hidden heartache tolerable.

All this makes a gentle and worthwhile, a pathetic and nowhere bathetic little play with a gorgeous piece of fooling in it by the theatre's leading comedian, Mr. C. B. PULMAN. Trotter—a kind of Cockney Arthur Sinclair character—appears in an episode in a corner of the hospital ward as a patient who breaks all the rules and even smuggles in beer. He has all the invention, contrivance, quickness, and irony of his type. When his episode is over we have no reason to expect to see him again. But, naturally enough, he reappears in the last act in the Matron's office since he has fully recovered from his illness and wants to say good-bye to the gentle-tongued lady whom he had so immeasurably preferred to the sharp-tongued Sister. In the spontaneous round of applause which greeted his reappearance, and the happy murmur which accompanied that applause, we seemed to ourselves to put a finger on the very pulse of a

community which enjoys the play when the play is good, takes an intelligent interest in whatever is offered, and gratefully appreciates its best and best-tried actors. A. D.

Experiences of a Junior Staff Officer

II—Attached for All Purposes

I SHALL never forget my first day as a staff officer, though, looking back on it now, I cannot see how it could very well have been other than it was. I left my regiment in a towering rage. I was determined that if I was to be attached to the Staff I would be attached with a vengeance, and I was still boiling when we reached the glittering marble building that housed 177 Corps Headquarters.

"By gum!" said Nobottle, my batman, as we went through a noble archway and came grinding to a standstill outside a door marked "B.G.S."

Nobody seemed to be about. I opened the door and went in.

"Is this 177 Corps?" I asked. "I'm attached here . . ."

"For all purposes," added Nobottle, who came panting up behind me with a large tin trunk. He lost his balance and set the trunk down hurriedly on a magnificent glass-topped desk. There was a sharp crack.

"Shall I get your camp-bed put up, sir?" gasped Nobottle.

At that moment I became aware that there was a brigadier sitting behind the desk. He started up in anger and alarm. I took advantage of his speechlessness to slip away. The door swung to just as Nobottle got the tin trunk half-way through it, and he yelled as something hit him from behind with colossal force.

It was a bad beginning. I looked round for someone to report to but saw nobody. I peered into various offices where arm-banded staff officers sat busily smoking, but they stared at me so coldly that I looked away. Finally I discovered an empty office with a desk and two chairs in it. I sat down wearily to think, scarcely noticing that Nobottle was busy stacking my luggage in a corner.

"Shall I get your camp-bed put up, sir?" he asked. It was always a favourite remark of his.

I nodded vaguely. Shortly afterwards he brought shaving-water and put my cigarette-card album on the mantelpiece. Obviously he had decided



"Never mind about the lights next door, Madam—two whites don't make a black."

things in his own mind and it was no good fighting against it.

So there we stayed. As the days passed and nobody seemed to be aware of our existence we gradually slipped into a routine. From time to time Nobottle added various essential articles of office equipment to my property. One day he brought in a couple of office trays—I have no idea where he got them—labelled "IN" and "OUT." He brought a typewriter which had Gothic type and sounded a small motor horn instead of a bell when one got near the end of a line. He brought a calendar which showed a Scottish joke for every day of the year, and a glass case containing two stuffed humming birds, as well as a huge paraffin stove which roared like a blast furnace when we made tea for our "elevenes."

My desk was one of those which have a space in the middle and drawers at each side. From 9 to 1 each day I sat at it, occasionally smoking. At eleven o'clock Nobottle put a cup of tea into my "IN" tray; I drank it, and

put the cup in the "OUT" tray. I had lunch out at the "Three Tuns" and from 2.30 to 5 I had the desk drawers put the other way round and sat at the other side of the desk.

On the whole it was a very pleasant existence. I grew attached to my cosy little office, which we gradually furnished with most of the usual home comforts, such as toast-racks, arm-chairs, radiograms, and hot-water bottles for the cold weather. It is true that Nobottle, who turned out to have a mania for staff work, was sometimes rather tiresome. Once or twice he made up my breakfast in the form of a file which was waiting in my "IN" tray when I got up. The porridge, scrambled eggs, etc., all had slips of paper attached to them, marked "For digestion and comment."

If it had not been for Nobottle we should in all probability be in that office to this day. There was only one thing that prevented him from being perfectly happy—I had not got an arm-band.

"All staff officers have arm-bands,

sir," he whined. "It's not right not to have one, that it isn't, sir." And so on. He made several attempts to steal arm-bands from other officers, making his way into secret conferences armed with a razor blade and dark glasses. But each time he was detected in the act. In the end he decided to make me an arm-band himself.

"I'll make you a nice yellow one, sir," he said, yellow being his favourite colour. Wearily I consented, and next day as I sat down at my desk he slipped a bright yellow arm-band on my arm and stood back to admire the effect.

That day when we went out to lunch an extraordinary thing happened. As we left the office a corporal came up to us and thrust spades into our hands. Jerking his thumb towards a group of men who appeared to be taking up the drains, he uttered the ominous words "Get cracking!"

Having no alternative we got cracking. I think we both remembered simultaneously that in the British Army yellow arm-bands are worn only by sanitary orderlies.



"Now if you want the Bren gun to become a living pulsating entity this is a book you can't be without."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

A Forecast

To-morrow *Always Comes* (CHATTO AND WINDUS, 5/-) is described by its author, Mr. VERNON BARTLETT, as a rash attempt to write history before it has happened. Projecting himself forwards to June 30th of a year which is unspecified but which one may reasonably suppose to be 1944, Mr. BARTLETT gives us a series of extracts from his diary, the first dealing with the imminent collapse of the German war machine and the last, dated November 15th, with a dinner in Washington, at which the author and Mr. Harold Nicolson disconsolately agree that the present Peace Conference is repeating most of the mistakes of the last one. Few political journalists would have the courage, and fewer still the ability, to forecast the immediate future with the precision imposed by the form Mr. BARTLETT has adopted. It is possible, of course, after so long and so varied an experience of politics and politicians, that Mr. BARTLETT was not conscious of any courage in making his forecast, and jotted it down almost automatically, in the mournful conviction that if one kept one's eye steadily on the past one could deduce the future if not in all its details at least in its general outline. The first problem recorded in his diary is whether the British and American armies should march straight into Germany after the collapse of the German forces, or wait until "there's been a good deal of the inevitable blood-letting." A few days later he notes that the United Nations governments in London are

anxious, for political reasons, to control the distribution of supplies in Europe. England and America feel that speed and efficiency are more important at the moment than politics, and Russia supports this view, wishing "to help leaders of the resistance movements in the occupied countries rather than the governments in exile." As the weeks pass, the problems multiply. America is doubtful about British enthusiasm for the war against Japan, Britain wonders whether Russia and Japan are becoming unduly cordial, General de Gaulle waxes impatient with England and America, threatening to set up a rival Peace Conference to the one at Washington, and meanwhile Polish influenza sweeps the Continent. No wonder that by the middle of November Mr. VERNON BARTLETT "dined alone in an atmosphere of grey misery and drank rye whisky." However, he ends on a note of hope, quoting Thomas Paine's "We have it in our power to begin the world over again," and not quoting Paine's later, less encouraging remarks about man as a political animal. H. K.

London Out of Bounds

Like the affable cheesemonger who in bygone days gouged a sample from the heart of his Cheddar and watched your face as you ate it, Mr. S. P. B. MAIS offers selected tit-bits of *The Home Counties* (BATSFORD, 10/6) to those whose countryside must needs consist of the two half-circles round London. So much, he says, was overrun before the war; so frequently are county councils "as lacking in public spirit as they are devoid of taste"; so malign has been the perversity of Government departments in choosing the best scenery for purposes equally suited to other sites, that the last rural amenities of Kent, Surrey, Essex, Middlesex and Hertfordshire have undeniably suffered. But having registered this protest in his introduction, the author soundly devotes himself to a search for rural England which—believe it or not—is surprisingly well rewarded. For the walker there are still predestined no-man's-lands like the Cambridge-Essex border and odd corners of East Herts; for the less adventurous, recondite treasures curiously crystallized in suburbia. Both are vividly described, with their proper complement of historical and literary glamour. The photographs, as is usual in this series, are outstandingly good. Mr. WILL F. TAYLOR'S "Mill on the Creek, Brightlingsea," deserves special mention. H. P. E.

World Estate for Development

Mr. H. W. FOSTER and Mr. E. V. BACON, beholding the wealth at mankind's disposal that is calling for nothing but an initial expenditure of brains, faith and capital, have examined in detail certain plots of earth to see what could be done with them. In particular, as a small sample of the whole, they have looked at British Honduras, a pleasant land about the size of Wales, rich in resources, favoured in climate, starved for population and bogged down in backwardness for lack of just the kind of help that could be given. Working always through the conception of a Development Authority empowered and endowed by a Government near enough to support but not so near as to dominate, and passing from aerial surveys and economic reconnaissances to roads, clinics and soil conservation, they are able to foresee the first stirrings of that natural cycle where increased demand and increased production succeed one another in beautiful harmony, and can work out in pounds, shillings and mahogany a long-term reward for outlays that private capital alone could never face. From the one example they rise, in *Wealth for Welfare* (MACMILLAN, 12/6), by easy stages to the whole Empire—

to the whole world. Admittedly there are some wild guesses among their anticipations, but their objective is a first rough splendid sketch, and at a time when most of the earth is poor and hungry it is a sketch that is challengingly full of hard facts and figures. C. C. P.

Geoff into Jeff

A charming and intelligent novel, *Thorofare* (FABER, 8/6) takes the burning theme of Anglo-American relations off the political stage of to-day to set it gracefully and meditatively in a nineteenth-century domesticated past. A Suffolk lad crosses the Atlantic—not resplendently in a Cunarder but economically from Liverpool to Philadelphia. With him is an academic uncle turned American citizen; and an aunt who, if uncle fails to pick up something younger and prettier on the voyage, is prepared to preside over his bachelor house in Carroll Street, Chesapeake. The perfect reciprocity between this establishment and the ancestral china-shop in Suffolk is convincingly stressed by Mr. CHRISTOPHER MORLEY; and the permutation of English into American which culminates in *Geoff* becoming *Jeff* for good is accomplished with the tenderest accession of loyalty to East Anglian idols. Even when *Jeff* begins to dream of a delightful southern belle he woos her, in an innocent travesty of Dante's famous "Paolo and Francesca" scene, with *The Tempest* for the fatal book and the girl's father to play *Prospero*. Obviously America was just as American in those days, England certainly more English. Yet a *rapprochement* was easier; and the book provides at least two clues to a momentous contemporary riddle.

H. P. E.

Basic Biography

Dr. VAN LOON, a Dutchman by birth, has long been settled in the United States, where he has written a number of best-sellers dealing in an easy painless way with such subjects as the history of mankind, man's achievements in the arts, the geography of our planet, and so on. A scholar has been defined as a person who knows more and more about less and less. The kind of reader produced by the popularizers of to-day might be defined as a person who knows less and less about more and more. In his latest volume (*Van Loon's Lives*. HARRAP, 18/-) Dr. VAN LOON gives, to quote his sub-title, "a true and faithful account of a number of highly interesting meetings with certain historical personages, from Confucius and Plato to Voltaire and Thomas Jefferson, about whom we had always felt a great deal of curiosity and who came as our dinner guests in a bygone year." Dr. VAN LOON's method is to supply brief biographical sketches of his illustrious visitors, interspersed with his personal impressions of their characters as revealed at the dinners over which he presided as their host. When he is in his biographical vein, he writes like this: "Plato, therefore, was not unlike those modern European students of statecraft who spin their yarns about an ideal state, with one eye on the Gestapo and the other on the nearest exit to the Lisbon Clipper and the U.S.A." Of his efforts to recreate his subjects as human beings the dinner attended by Shakespeare, Cervantes and Molière is a fair example. Shakespeare, "very much the man of the world in his fine velvet coat," is rather condescending to Cervantes. Cervantes is much too civil to show any resentment. Molière turns up late, his head enveloped in a red handkerchief, the wind having blown his wig away. "What did they talk about?" Dr. VAN LOON asks, and answers that, like any group of modern playwrights drinking tea in one of the Russian *trakteers* along West Fifty-seventh Street, they talked shop. It

would not, however, be fair to Dr. VAN LOON to suggest that he is entirely insensible to past greatness. He has a charming page on Mozart; and in spite of an enthusiasm for the New World which culminates in his calling Thomas Jefferson the most honoured of his guests, he reveals a certain uneasiness about modern culture when he makes Erasmus exclaim: "And you tell me that all of them can now read and write! But what do they read and what do they write?"

H. K.

Success Story

"It was the privilege of a lifetime to stand between those bright-eyed babies and that devastating plague (smallpox)." That one word privilege is the clue to Dr. PAUL W. HARRISON's attitude to his profession as told in his book *Doctor in Arabia* (ROBERT HALE, 15/-). He tells us that he decided to set up in Arabia as soon as he had qualified because he "wanted to pit the Christian way of life against the worst types of human trouble and sin," and though wickedness and distress are "knee-deep in Baltimore, out in Arabia they are up to a man's neck." He has been now for thirty years in and about Muscat, Arabia, and his book tells of the fight made daily by him and his wife against disease, superstition, poverty and dirt. He writes of the sheikh who insisted on a demonstration tooth (mercifully a bad one was ready) being extracted from a slave before he would open his own mouth to the forceps; of male relations crowding round the operating table; of the threat of death when an operation had failed; of modesty that kept the patient in one room while her injured foot protruded into the next; and of imaginary illnesses, whose described symptoms were "fish swimming in the stomach." The book is written with humour and kindness, and is the unpretentious story of a very great work carried out in the hottest city on earth.

B. E. B.



"Watch them lights, Mum—they're treacherous."



"She foretold the old man's rise to fortune."

More Collected Essays of J. Pope Clugston

LUCK

I AM often asked if I believe in luck. Well, as the hangman said, it all depends. I don't think *bad* luck depends on the mere whims of fate; it isn't left to chance, exactly, but is just good old cause and effect. It's coming to you, that's all, and is working on a definite system. Occasionally, however, something goes wrong; the bad luck never arrives after all, and as a result you get good luck. This means that *good* luck does depend to a certain extent upon chance. In other words, bad luck has nothing to do with luck, but good luck has.

A good many of the old "superstitions" about attracting bad luck are perfectly sound. I have tested them. Seeing the new moon through glass, for instance. . . . Well, I wear glasses and so I always see the new moon through glass, and I always have

bad luck. This seems pretty conclusive; it couldn't be mere chance *every* time. Three on a match? I have burnt my fingers so often I can't insure them against fire any more but only against hail, lightning, burglary, and hurricanes. Especially with my Aunt Quassia, who has never fully grasped the principles of igniting a cigarette; if she is the third on a match, you not only burn your fingers and hers but a few tufts of her hair and the tip of her nose as well. If Boy Scouts had to light Aunt Quassia's cigarette with one match before passing their tenderfoot test this country would be packed solid with permanent tenderfeet. Then, again, there is the black cat crossing your path. Only last night I had that happen and I tripped on the brute and sprained one of my ankles and three of hers. And I learn from my sea-going friends that it is bad luck to tow a painter or any kind of line from a

small boat. This is only too true; most of the fishing in these parts is done by trolling, where of course you *have* to tow a line, and, by golly, I never catch a darn thing . . . causes bad luck, you see.

I have some superstitions of my own which are anything but idle, and which might be passed on. For instance, I have a feeling that it is unlucky to put your hand over your mouth while yawning. My Cousin Hapgood did this once and got bitten. And speaking of my Cousin Hapgood, it is always *extremely* unlucky to have him see you before you see him.

FISH

Speaking of fishing (I *was* speaking of it just now, I think), there was a curious little old man fishing from the bank of a local stream the other day, and as I felt curious too I asked him what he was catching. "Organic

phosphorus, mostly," said he. "Much else?" I asked. "Oh, yes . . . protein, you know, and a bit of fat, and miscellaneous," he said. "But carbohydrates . . . nil."

THE STRANGENESS OF STRANGERS

I enjoy stopping strangers like that and engaging them in chat. Many people do this, either from pure friendliness or in order to learn a new fact every day, but I have quite enough friends of my own without bothering strangers, and I very seldom learn anything new if I can help it, being troubled with too much salvage in the way of old facts as it is. No, my purpose is different. I have always had an idea that all strangers are queer, to say the least, and I enjoy gathering fresh proof of this. I find, by the way, that a pleasant approach is apt to make them polite, and so you get simply nowhere. A very good opening is to say "And what do you think you're doing, my good man?" This almost always knocks the politeness out of them and you get down to their real selves. This morning I met a very interesting old farmer who was queerer than most. He was grumbling about the number of pieces of nobbly granite in his land. Just another proof of the ignorance of the average farmer . . . he simply won't learn anything about scientific agriculture. I told him that in time granite makes some of our best soil. In about ten million years it rots down and becomes beautiful soil. But was he interested? Not a bit. What can you do with a chap like that?

CONTEMPT

Everyone knows, or should know, what constitutes contempt of court in a general way. But is it contempt to attempt to defend yourself on a charge of contempt? This seems rather important. And then there's another thing. There is a certain court (not a very high one) of which I am deeply contemptuous. I can't help it, but that is no excuse, of course. Well, should I go and give myself up, do you think? If I just sit here pretending I know nothing about my crime—does that make me an accessory after the fact?

THE MACHINE AGE

Last night my wife and I were listening to a re-broadcast of a speech made earlier in the day by an eminent statesman, and she said "He sounds a little wee bit tired, poor man." Well, actually, of course, it was just a re-broadcast . . . he wasn't there at all, so how could he sound tired? Yet my good wife couldn't see this.

THE DEVIL WALKS IN MINE.

Wm. Blake remarked to Crabb Robinson "I fear Wordsworth loves nature, and nature is the work of the devil." Which gives us a vividly unpleasant picture of the sort of garden Wm. Blake had. It must have been very like mine.

MORE ABOUT THE DEVIL

They say that if you speak the truth you shame the devil. I think this is probably true . . . which will shame him all the more, won't it? You see, if you go round speaking the truth too much you are just making trouble for its own sake . . . there isn't any profit to speak of. And this shocks the devil. That isn't *his* method at all; trouble is a *business* with him, and he sees no reason why it shouldn't pay.

o o

Not the Pumpkin

THE yearly Giant Pumpkin
Is with us as of old,
It interests the bumpkin
But leaves the poet cold;
It might no doubt, though hoary,
Have served me for a song
But for this newer glory,
A Parsnip five feet long.

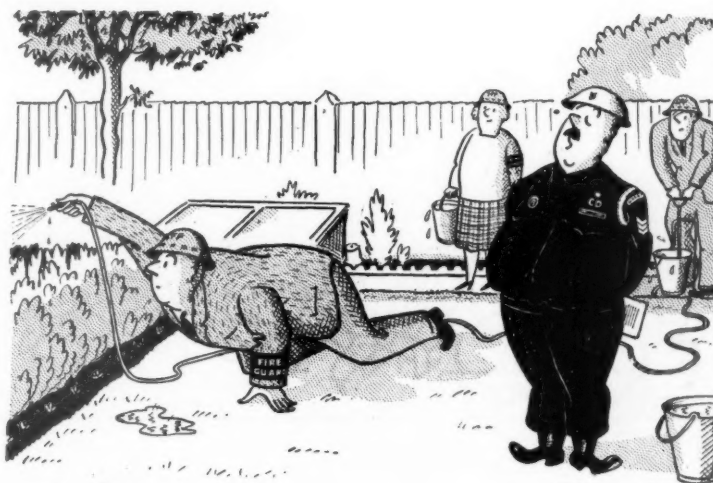
You may perhaps pooh-pooh me
As guilty of a fake
But it's a fact, beshrew me;
The Press makes no mistake;
Therefore I speak no fable,
Therefore my theme rings true,
This mammoth vegetable
Is genuine, though new.

Details, I grant, are lacking.
I have not learned its girth,
And where a growth so whacking
Came from what native earth
I know not. More by token
How it was disinterred
Whole, matchless and unbroken
Somehow I haven't heard.

Whether, a thing unbeaten,
It's going round on show,
Or if it's just been eaten,
It's not for us to know,
And here I warn the curious
That nagging me for more
Would only make me furious
And brand him for a bore.

I shall not, though I meant to,
Acclaim the Pumpkin now;
I leave it, well content, to
Bards of a lower brow;
To me a five-foot Parsnip
If adequately versed
Ought to turn out a star snip,
And I've got on it first.

DUM-DUM.



Pat Auld

"I think the marrows have had enough water now, so we'll take the second bomb, which, by a lucky chance, happens to have fallen smack among the tomatoes . . ."

Horribly Bored by Bees

IN recent years there has swelled from all quarters the murmuring of innumerable bee-keepers. From being a mystery, understood only by vague old men in smocks, with straws in their hair and second sight, the craft shows signs of descending from the occult to the mundane.

In Russia the head bee-keeper of a collective farm is one of the most important officials. This fits in well with one's ideas of the old Russia, where straws were the normal head-gear and Chekhovian vagueness prevailed, but it is necessary to recognize that the modern Russian bee-keeper is the most scientific in the world. His hives are fitted with thermostatically controlled central heating, and his bees are trained always to fly in friendly formation. When, by some strange lapse of discipline, they presume to swarm, instead of claiming them by the old-fashioned method of hedge-hopping on foot while banging on tin cans, he pursues them in a Stormovik equipped with a carefully tuned carillon of electric bells playing the Leningrad Symphony.

The English bee-keeper, though he has advanced since the days of Samson and even of Virgil, has not yet reached this stage. He has even resisted the temptation to call himself an apiculturist. The individual may outwardly

resemble an ordinary human being, but about a meeting or susurrations of bee-keepers there is still an atmosphere of ecstasy, a touch of the Rosierucian.

I myself shall never attain to this esoteric circle. There is, it is true, for patriotic reasons a hive in my garden, which I open when it is absolutely unavoidable, but I am not a bee-keeper. My attitude is well summed up in the well-known bee lines:

*I could not love thee, dear, so much
Loved I not honey more.*

When I want to steel myself to bear anything particularly horrible, such as an amateur concert, I have only to cast my mind back to the time when Dorcas telephoned me at the wardens' post that there was a swarm at the top of the big apple-tree. An officious fellow warden offered to take my place, and wildly hoping for supernatural intervention I returned, by the longest route, home. Having never seen a swarm before I had first to read up all about it, then to conduct the process of "taking" it by stages, returning at intervals through a dense cloud of insects to consult the book.

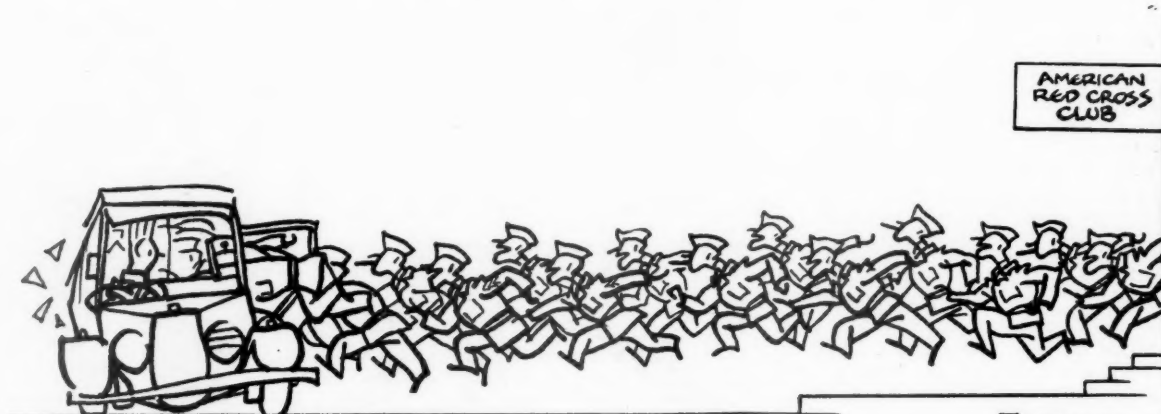
Some people would affect to regard this sort of thing as character-forming, but prolonged contemplation of this

soulless, all-feminine totalitarian organization fills me only with loathing. More than once, when the hive has been killing off its drones, I have been observed shaking my fist and making impassioned speeches about the Rights of Man. This emotion is naturally reciprocated. If a bee, as happens occasionally, takes a more than usual dislike to my face as I stroll innocently round the garden, within five minutes my features assume a shape so grotesque that strangers scream with terror.

Last year the district was infested with American Foul Brood and other international distempers, but my bees remained obstinately healthy. In the winter I meditated removing the roof in cold weather, but nobler feelings (coupled with the fact that Dorcas could not fail to notice) prevailed. I have since made tentative efforts to sell the whole outfit, even to give them away, but people merely giggle in polite incredulity. Perhaps this winter will be very cold. . . .

A deputation of neighbours has just called. They feel that there should be a local Bee Club, and that I am just the person to start it. They brushed aside my protestations and laughed them to scorn as mock modesty.

I wonder where I can find some straws.




"Hey—taxi!"


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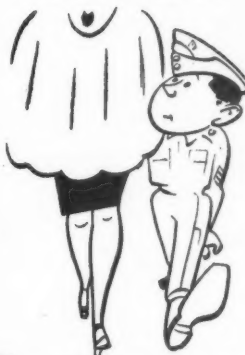
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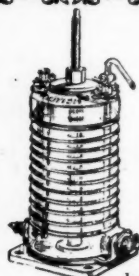
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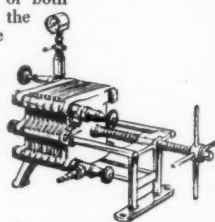
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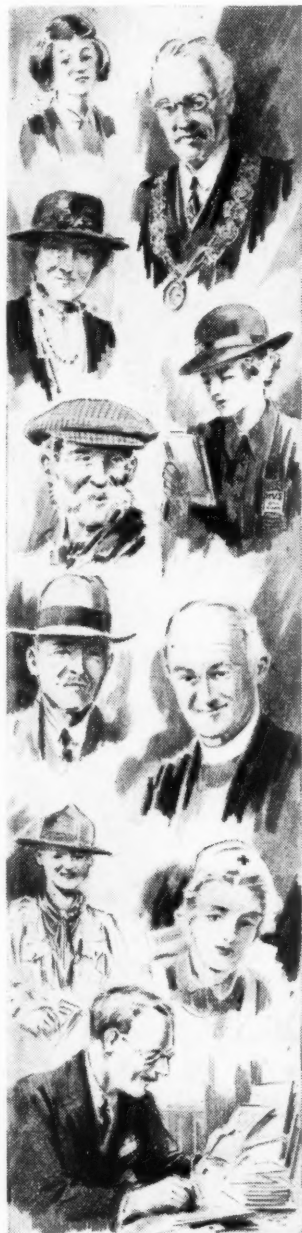


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Pitch it higher,
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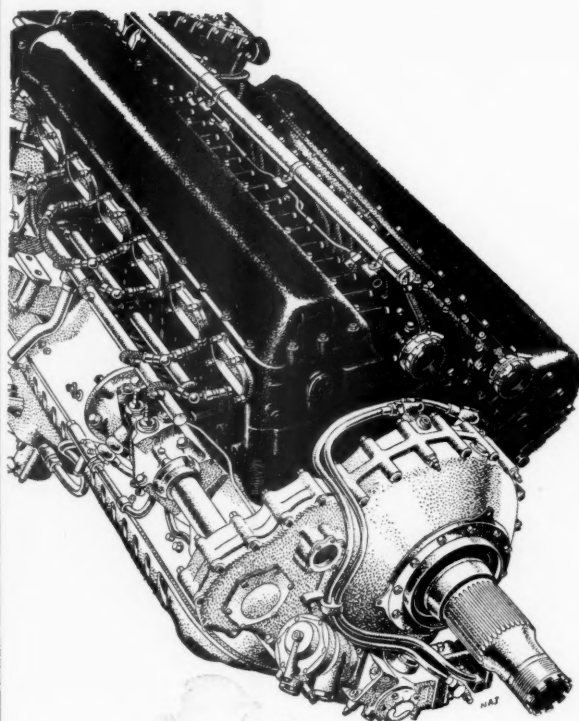
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